The Politics of Human Rights

Mondays/Wednesdays/Fridays 3:00-3:50 pm, William Wehr Physics Building 138

Instructor: Dongwook Kim
Office: William Wehr Physics Building 415
Office Hours: Mondays/Wednesdays/Fridays 10:50-11:50 am and 1:50-2:50 pm
Email: dongwook.kim@marquette.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces students to the theoretical frameworks, empirical cases, policy instruments, and debates in the field of human rights. The course is structured in four parts. First, we will examine the evolution of human rights in its philosophical, historical, and political contexts. We will address key questions such as: What are human rights? Are they universally applicable? How and why have international human rights standards come into being? How do they change over time? Second, we will examine various mechanisms and actors for the promotion and protection of human rights at the global, regional, and national levels. What are the United Nations and regional mechanisms for human rights protection? What explains the evolution of the UN human rights activities? How are international human rights enforced? What is the role of nongovernmental organizations and activists in the field of human rights? What are their dilemmas? Third, we will examine the trajectory and effectiveness of humanitarian intervention. Under what conditions is humanitarian intervention justified and necessary? How has its international legitimacy changed over time? What explains the achievements and limitations of humanitarian intervention in the post-Cold War period? Fourth, we will examine various forms of transitional justice. How should new democracies cope with past human rights abuses? What explains variations in the forms of transitional justice across time and space? In addressing these and other questions, we will explore several country cases around the globe, such as Argentina, the former Yugoslavia, Libya, Rwanda, South Africa, Sudan, and the United States.
COURSE MATERIALS

The following books are required and should be available for purchase at Sweeney’s College Books, the Book Marq, and Amazon.com.


A number of articles are also required and can be downloaded from Desire2Learn.

Other useful sources of information are appended at the end of the syllabus.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Requirements:

- Attendance and participation: 10%
- Mid-term exam: 20%
- Final exam: 40%
- Thesis statement: 5%
- Research paper: 25%

Your grade is based on several contributions. First, you must do all the reading in time, attend every session, and actively participate in the discussion. Choosing to listen in the discussion is not acceptable. Please note that both class attendance and discussion participation are equally important, each comprising five percent of your final course grade. Per Marquette University’s Undergraduate Attendance Policy, you may miss no more than six sessions of the course during the semester. Each additional absence after six absences will lower your final course grade by one letter grade. Please note that if you miss a discussion section and your absence is within the permitted six absences, you will receive only attendance points, but not participation points.

Second, you must write a research paper on a topic of your choice and relating to the themes of the course. In your paper, you will analyze an empirical phenomenon in the field of human rights by making a theoretically-informed argument and supporting it with empirical evidence. A critical book review will not be accepted. In case your paper topic overlaps with empirical case studies covered in lectures, your paper must demonstrate substantial independent research. Assuming 12 point, Times New Roman, double-spacing, and standard one-inch margins, your paper must be no longer than 10 pages of text (15 for graduate students). Please do not cite any online sources (e.g., Wikipedia), except for
those recommended at the end of the syllabus. Articles and books should be your main references.

The paper is due at the beginning of class on December 5. Please email a copy of your paper and hand in a hard copy of your paper by that time. Late papers will be penalized one letter grade per day including weekends and holidays if turned in after class on December 5. To help you on your way, I will ask that you submit to me a two-page thesis statement explaining your paper topic and including an annotated bibliography at the beginning of class on October 10. Also, email a copy of your thesis statement by that time. Your paper topic must be approved this way. After this, your topic choice is final and cannot be changed.

Third, one mid-term exam and the final exam will be administered on October 17 and December 16, respectively, and only in class. In the exams, you will be tested on all the materials covered in lectures and the readings. Please note that the mid-term exam will focus on the course materials covered up to October 12, and the final exam the entire semester. There will be no make-up exams except for medical or family emergencies. No extra credit will be given. I will hold a review session prior to each exam.

Please note that I have zero tolerance for academic dishonesty including cheating, dishonest conduct, plagiarism, and collusion. For more details on Marquette University’s Academic Honesty Policies and Procedures, please see: [http://www.marquette.edu/mucentral/registrar/policy_honesty.shtml](http://www.marquette.edu/mucentral/registrar/policy_honesty.shtml).

You are expected to arrive in time as late arrivals are disruptive to your fellow students. Please do not use your laptop computer during class for non-class activities (e.g., email or web-surfing unrelated to class) because it detracts from your fellow students’ learning experience.

**Grading Scale:**

- A:  93-100
- AB:  88-92.9
- B:  83-87.9
- BC:  78-82.9
- C:  73-77.9
- CD:  68-72.9
- D:  60-67.9
- F:  0-59.9

**Dates to Remember:**

- Mid-term exam: October 17.
- Research paper: December 5.
- Final exam: December 16.
COURSE OUTLINE

I. INTRODUCTION

August 29: Introduction and Course Overview

August 31: The Ground and Nature of Human Rights


II. THE UNIVERSALITY DEBATE

September 2: The Female Genital Cutting Debate


   RECOMMENDED


September 7: The Headscarf Debate


September 9: Discussion Section

III. THE EVOLUTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

September 12: Political Origins


September 14: Human Rights between the “Revolutions”


**RECOMMENDED**


**September 16: Discussion Section**

**September 19: The Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights**


**September 21: The Resurrection of Human Rights in the 1970s**


**RECOMMENDED**


**September 23: Discussion Section**

**IV. PROMOTING AND PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS**

**September 26: The United Nations Human Rights Regime**


**RECOMMENDED**


International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)
International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)
Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)
International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICRMW)
Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (ICRPD)

September 28: The Torture Debate: The Case of the United States


RECOMMENDED


September 30: Discussion Section

October 3: The Growth and Power of Human Rights International Nongovernmental Organizations


RECOMMENDED

October 5: The Case of Amnesty International


RECOMMENDED


October 7: Discussion Section

October 10: The Dilemmas of Human Rights International Nongovernmental Organizations

Clifford Bob, “Merchants of Morality,” Foreign Policy 129 (March/April, 2002), pp. 36-45.

RECOMMENDED


THESIS STATEMENTS DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS

October 12: Regional Human Rights Regimes

RECOMMENDED


October 14: Exam Review

OCTOBER 17: IN-CLASS, MID-TERM EXAMINATION, 3:00-3:50 PM

October 19: Film Screening

Movie: Shake Hands With the Devil, Roger Spottiswoode (Director), Roy Dupuis (Performer) (2007).

V. HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTION

October 24: Introduction to Humanitarian Intervention


RECOMMENDED


October 26: Theoretical Perspectives on the Causes of Genocide and Mass Killing


October 28: Discussion Section
October 31: Iraq and Somalia


**RECOMMENDED**


November 2: Rwanda


**RECOMMENDED**


November 4: Discussion Section

November 7: Bosnia and Kosovo


November 9: Darfur, Sudan


November 11: Discussion Section

November 14: Libya


RECOMMENDED


VI. TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE

November 16: The Genealogy, Promise, and Limits of Transitional Justice


November 18: Discussion Section

November 21: The Nuremberg Trial


November 28: The International Criminal Court


RECOMMENDED

International Criminal Court, Frequently asked questions, available at: [http://www.icc-cpi.int/Menus/ICC/About+the+Court/Frequently+asked+Questions/](http://www.icc-cpi.int/Menus/ICC/About+the+Court/Frequently+asked+Questions/).

**November 30: Truth Commissions**


**RECOMMENDED**


**December 2: Discussion Section**

**December 5: Domestic Trials**


**RECOMMENDED**


**RESEARCH PAPERS DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS**

**December 7: Conclusion**

**December 9: Exam Review**

**DECEMBER 16: IN-CLASS, FINAL EXAMINATION, 10:30 AM-12:30 PM**
USEFUL SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Human Rights Intergovernmental Organizations

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights
http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Pages/WelcomePage.aspx

United Nations Peacekeeping

Council of Europe
http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/default_en.asp

European Court of Human Rights
http://www.echr.coe.int/echr

Organization of American States

Human Rights Nongovernmental Organizations

Amnesty International
http://www.amnesty.org/

Human Rights Watch
http://www.hrw.org/

Physicians for Human Rights
http://www.phrusa.org/

Governments

U.S. Department of State
http://www.state.gov/g/drl/hr/

Human Rights Libraries

http://www.ll.georgetown.edu/guides/HumanRightsLaw.cfm

University of Minnesota Human Rights Library
http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/